ARMY SERGEANTS MAJOR ACADEMY (FSC-TATS)
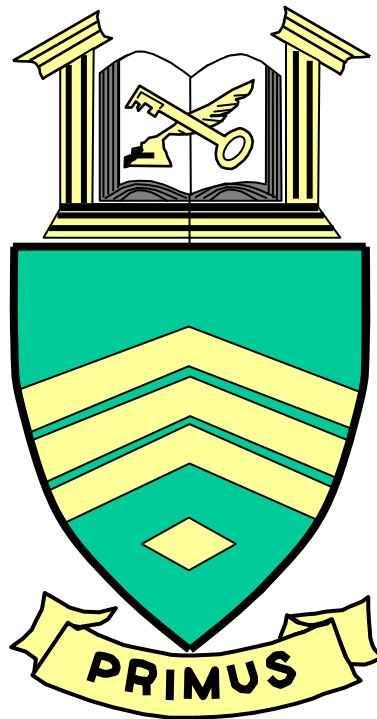
C651 (052002)   JUN 01

COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

PRERESIDENT TRAINING SUPPORT PACKAGE

Overview

History is replete with examples of communication failures and the effects of those failures. In these extreme cases, miscommunication can result in extensive loss of life and property. In an organization or interpersonal sense, miscommunication can often be no less disastrous in terms of intended outcomes. Communication has been described as the "thread that holds the various interpersonal parts of an organization together." Yet, as organizational leaders we frequently do a notoriously poor job of communicating.   In this lesson, you will examine how communication between individuals takes place, and what factors affect the quality of that interaction. You will see how differences or similarities among the people involved in communication affect the process, and whether the nonverbal component of communication influences the transfer of meaning to the extent suggested in popular literature. As a leader, you will examine aspects of the communication process that will help make you a more convincing communicator. Finally, you will learn how active listening can help you, as a leader, to communicate effective

Inventory of Lesson Materials

Prior to starting this lesson ensure you received all materials (pages, tapes, disks, etc.) required for this Training Support Package. Go to the "**This [TSP or Appendix] Contains**" section, on page one of the TSP and the first page of each Appendix, and verify you have all the pages. If you are missing any material, contact the First Sergeant Course Class Coordinator at the training institution where you will attend phase II FSC-TATS.

Point of Contact

If you have any questions regarding this lesson, contact the First Sergeant Course Class Coordinator at the training institution where you will attend phase II FSC-TATS.

PRESIDENT TRAINING SUPPORT PACKAGE

TSP Number /Title
C651
Communicate Effectively as a Unit or Staff Leader.

Effective Date   JUN 01

Supersedes TSPs
C651, Communicate Effectively as a Unit or Staff Leader.
Dec 99

TSP User
This TSP contains a training requirement that you must complete prior to attending phase II, FSC-TATS. It will take you approximately 2 hours to complete this requirement. You will use this information to develop your communication skills.

Proponent
The proponent for this TSP is the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy.

Comments and Recommendations
Send comments and recommendations of DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to:
    ATTN: ATSS-DCF FSC TATS
    COMMANDANT, USASMA
    BLDG 11291, BIGGS FIELD
    FT BLISS, TX 79908-8002

Foreign Disclosure Restrictions
The lesson developer in coordination with the USASMA foreign disclosure authority has reviewed this lesson. This lesson is releasable to foreign military students from all requesting foreign countries without restrictions.

This TSP Contains   The following table lists the material in this TSP

SECTION 1   ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Task(s) Trained   This lesson trains the tasks listed in the following table(s):

Task number:	158-100-1340
Task title:	Communicate Effectively as a Unit or Staff Leader,
Condition:	As a First Sergeant,
Standard:	IAW FM 22-100.
Task proponent	Command and General Staff College, Ft Leavenworth, KS

Tasks Reinforced   None

Prerequisite Lessons   None

Clearance and Access   There is no clearance or access requirement for this lesson.

References   The following table lists references for this lesson.

Number	Title	Date	Para	Additional Information
FM 22-100	Army Leadership	Aug 99		

Equipment Required   None

Materials Required   Paper and pen or pencil.

Safety Requirements   None

Risk Assessment Level   Low

Environ-mental Consider-ations   None

Lesson Approval   The following individuals have reviewed and approved this lesson for publication and incorporation into the First Sergeant Course--The Army Training System.

Name/Signature	Rank	Title	Date
Kevin L. Graham	MSG	Lesson Developer	
Chris L. Adams	SGM	Chief Instructor, FSC	
John W. Mayo	SGM	Course Chief, FSC-TATS	

SECTION II INTRODUCTION

Terminal   At the completion of this lesson, you will--
Learning
Objective

Action:	Demonstrate knowledge of communication skills required of a unit or staff leader.
Conditions:	as a first sergeant in a classroom environment, given Student Handout (SH)-1,
Standard:	Demonstrated knowledge of communication skills required of a unit or staff leader IAW SH-1.

Evaluation   Before entering phase II FSC-TATS, you will receive the end of Phase I Performance Examination that will include questions based on material in this lesson. On that examination, you must answer at least 70 percent of the questions correctly to achieve a GO.

Instructional   In your NCOES courses you received training in the fundamentals of
lead-in   communication. Throughout your career you have employed communication techniques. In this lesson you will review the fundamentals of effective communication and their relationship to organizational effectiveness.

SECTION III PRESENTATION

ELO 1

Action:	Identify the components of the Cybernetic Communication Model,
Conditions:	as a first sergeant in a classroom environment, given SH-1,
Standard:	Identified the components of the Cybernetic Communication Model IAW SH-1.

Learning Step/
Activity (LS/A)
1, ELO 1
- Read ELO 1 above.

- Study the material on, *The Components of the Cybernetic Communication Model,* in SH-1, p SH-1-1 thru SH-1-5.

- Complete Learning Exercise at Appendix B.

- Compare your responses with the suggested solutions found in the SLE-1 at Appendix B.

- If your responses do not agree with the answers in the solution discussion, review the lesson material.

ELO 2

Action:	Identify the factors that distort meaning in the communication process,
Conditions:	as a first sergeant in a classroom environment, given SH-1,
Standard:	Identified the factors that distort meaning in the communication process IAW SH-1.

LS/A 2, ELO 2
- Read ELO 2 above.

- Study the material on, *Distorting the Meaning of a Message*, in SH-1, p SH-1-6 thru SH-1-13.

- Complete Learning Exercise 2 at Appendix B.

- Compare your responses with the suggested solutions found in the SLE-2 at Appendix B.

- If your responses do not agree with the answers in the solution discussion, review the lesson material.

ELO 3

Action:	Identify the communication paths in an organization,
Conditions:	as a first sergeant in a classroom environment, given SH-1,
Standard:	Identified the communication paths in an organization IAW SH-1.

LS/A 3, ELO 3
- Read ELO 3 above.
- Study the material on, *Communication Paths in an Organization*, in SH-1, p SH-1-14 thru SH-1-18.
- Complete Learning Exercise 3 at Appendix B.
- Compare your responses with the suggested solutions found in the SLE-3 at Appendix B.
- If your responses do not agree with the answers in the solution discussion, review the lesson material.

ELO 4

Action:	Identify common communication problems in an organization,
Conditions:	as a first sergeant in a classroom environment, given SH-1,
Standard:	Identified common communication problems in an organization IAW SH-1.

LS/A 4, ELO 4
- Read ELO 4 above.
- Study the material on, *Communication Problems in an Organization*, in SH-1, p SH-1-19 thru SH-1-25.
- Complete Learning Exercise 4 at Appendix B.
- Compare your responses with the suggested solutions found in SLE-4 at Appendix B.
- If your responses do not agree with the answers in the solution discussion, review the lesson material.

ELO 5

Action:	State the factors that make a message convincing,
Conditions:	as a first sergeant in a classroom environment, given SH-1,
Standard:	Stated the factors that make a message convincing IAW SH-1.

LS/A 5, ELO 5

- Read ELO 5 above.

- Study the material on, *Factors that Make a Message Convincing*, in SH-1, p SH-1-26 thru SH-1-32.

- Complete Learning Exercise 5 at Appendix B.

- Compare your responses with the suggested solutions found in SLE-5 at Appendix B.

- If your responses do not agree with the answers in the solution discussion, review the lesson material.

SECTION IV SUMMARY

Review/ Summarize Lesson

Company-level leaders are responsible for, not only developing their own competence in using effective communication techniques, but also in their subordinates. Employing effective communication techniques has a tremendous impact on unit effectiveness. Leaders who invest the time and energy in developing their communication techniques are investing in the future of their subordinates and their unit.

Check on Learning

If your completed practical exercises do not agree with the suggested solutions, be sure to review the student readings.

Transition to Next Lesson

The concepts utilized in "Communicating Effectively as a Leader or Staff Member," are applicable to other leadership topics. As you progress through the leadership and communication lessons, look for places to apply concepts and build links to other leadership topics.

SECTION V STUDENT EVALUATION

Testing Requirements	Before entering FSC TATS Phase II, you will receive the end of Phase I Performance Examination that will include questions based on material in this lesson. On that examination, you must answer at least 70 percent of the questions correctly to achieve a GO.

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SECTION VI, QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions
- Complete the following actions:
- Enter your name, rank and the date you complete this questionnaire.

Name:	Rank:	Date:

- Answer items 1 through 6 below. Use additional pages if necessary.
- Fold the questionnaire so the address for USASMA is visible.
- Print your return address, add postage, and mail.

Note: Your response to this questionnaire will assist the Academy in refining and improving this course. When completing the questionnaire, answer each question frankly. Your assistance helps build and maintain the best Academy curriculum possible.

Item 1   Do you feel you have met the learning objectives of this lesson?

Item 2   Was the material covered in this lesson new to you?

Item 3   Which parts of this lesson were most helpful to you in meeting the learning objectives?

Item 4   How could we improve the format of this lesson?

Item 5   How could we improve the content of this lesson?

Item 6   Do you have additional questions or comments? If you do, please list them here. You may add additional pages if necessary.

ATTN: ATSS-DCF FSC TATS
COMDT
USASMA
BLDG 11291 BIGGGS FIELD
FORT BLISS, TEXAS 79918-8002.

APPENDIX B

LESSON EXERCISES

INDEX OF LESSON EXERCISES

**This
Appendix
Contains**

This Appendix contains the items listed in this table---

Title/Synopsis	Pages
Lesson Exercise 1	LE-1-1 thru LE-1-2
Solution, Lesson Exercise 1	SLE-1-1 thru SLE-1-2
Lesson Exercise 2	LE-2-1 thru LE-2-3
Solution, Lesson Exercise 2	SLE-2-1 thru SLE-2-3
Lesson Exercise 3	LE-3-1 thru LE-3-2
Solution, Exercise 3	SLE-3-1 thru SLE-3-2
Lesson Exercise 4	LE-4-1 thru LE-4-3
Solution, Lesson Exercise 4	SLE-4-1 thru SLE-4-3
Lesson Exercise 5	LE-5-1 thru LE-5-2
Lesson Exercise 6	LE-6-1 thru LE-6-2
Solution, Lesson Exercise 6	SLE-6-1 thru SLE-6-2

LESSON EXERCISE 1, PART 1

A CYBERNETIC MODEL OF COMMUNICATIONS

(ANSWER QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 6 BELOW. COMPARE YOUR ANSWERS
WITH THOSE IN THE SOLUTION FOLLOWING THIS EXERCISE. IF YOU DO
NOT SCORE 70% OR HIGHER, YOU SHOULD REVIEW THE MATERIAL ON
PAGES SH-1-1 thru SH-1-5 AT APPENDIX C.)

1. Define the following communication terms: (3 points each)

a. sender_____
_____

b. communications_____
_____

c. encoding_____
_____

d. decoding _____
_____

e. receiver_____
_____

f. symbol_____
_____

g. feedback_____
_____

h. noise_____
_____

i. message channel_____
_____

j. perceived message_____
_____

2. Explain what we mean when we say that during the communication process, the
    feedback becomes the new message (15 points).

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

3. The leader said "I knew you'd do it that way!" This was said with a raised voice and a
pointed finger. Interpret what was said (15 points). How would the message change if
the leader smiled?

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

4.   What causes noise? How does noise interfere with the communications process?
(15 points)

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

5. What do we mean when we refer to the communications model as being a cybernetic
    loop? (15 points)

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

6. List two common phrases that indicate the communication process failed. (10 points)

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____

SOLUTION TO LESSON EXERCISE 1

A CYBERNETIC MODEL OF COMMUNICATIONS

(IF YOU DO NOT SCORE 70% OR HIGHER, YOU SHOULD REVIEW THE
LESSON MATERIALS YOU JUST COVERED ON PAGES SH-1-1 thru SH-1-5,
APPENDIX C.)

1. Define the following communication terms: (3 points each)
    a. Sender: The originator of the message or communication effort. SH-1-2
    b. Communication: The process of transferring information from one person to
another. SH-1-2
    c. Encoding: Putting the intended message into commonly accepted symbols, which
are believed to be understood by the intended receiver. SH-1-4
    d. Decoding: What the receiver does upon receipt of a message--mentally sorts out
symbols and interprets them. SH-1-4
    e. Receiver: The audience for whom the message was intended. The person who
receives the message. SH-1-2
    f. Symbol: Something which stands for something else. In communications this
includes such things as selected words or phrases, expressions, and tones. SH-1-4
    g. Feedback: Response to a message which the sender receives from the receiver.
SH-1-4
    h. Noise: Distortions, disruptions and breakdowns that are part of the transmission
process. Noise primarily results from source/receiver differences and unintended
supplemental nonverbal communications and takes communications out of the realm of
common sense. SH-1-5
    i. Message channel: Means by which a message is sent: face-to-face, telephonic,
written, etc. SH-1-4
    j. Perceived message: The message which the receiver understands after he/she
translates the received symbols within constraints of the particular psychological
environment. SH-1-4

2. Explain what we mean when we say that during the communication process, the
feedback becomes the new message (15 points).
The sender encodes the intended message in symbols which he/she thinks will be
understood by the receiver. The sender sends the message through the selected channel
and the receiver interprets that message through his/her own physical and psychological
realities. The noise which occurs between the sending of the message and the receipt of
the message will distort the message. The sender wants to know if his/her message was
accurately received by the receiver. The only way that he/she can know if the message
was accurately received is through the feedback received from the sender. Thus, the
feedback from the receiver is a new message to the sender which provides the sender
with information about the message which the receiver actually received. The feedback
is a new message from the original receiver to the original sender. SH-1-4

3.   The leader said "I knew you'd do it that way!" This was said with a raised voice and a pointed finger. Interpret what was said (15 points).
<u>The raised voice typically indicates that the individual speaking is not happy with something. A pointed finger most often indicates that the speaker is making a definite point or emphasizing what he/she is saying. Given this context, it appears that the message is a strong correction to the receiver and that the sender is not happy with something that was done</u>.
How would the message change if the leader smiled? <u>If the leader was smiling, the smile would probably be taken as an indication that the sender was actually pleased with the results. The smile would probably negate any negative impression sent by the words, voice and finger</u>. SH-1-4

4.   What causes noise? (15 points)
   <u>Noise primarily results from source/receiver differences and unintended supplemental nonverbal communications and takes communications out of the realm of common sense</u>.
How does noise interfere with the communications process? <u>All messages go through the psychological and physical filters of the individuals involved in the communications process. The perceived</u> message is the message which the receiver receives and may be <u>different from the one intended</u>. SH-1-5

5.   What do we mean when we refer to the communications model as being a cybernetic loop? (15 points)
   <u>Cybernetic means self-correcting. The communications model portrays a self-correcting loop where the sender can determine if the message received by the original source was the one intended. This is accomplished from the feedback which the source receives from the receiver. Therefore, through the process of comparing the original message and corresponding feedback, the source and receiver can resolve communication problems and ensure that the final message is the intended one</u>. SH-1-4 to 1-5

6.   Give two common phrases which indicate that the communication process failed.(10 points)
<u>"That's not what I really meant." But I told them to ...", "You must have been mistaken.", etc</u>. SH-1-2

LESSON EXERCISE 2, PART 2

SOURCE/RECEIVER DIFFERENCES, THE DISTORTION OF MEANING.

(ANSWER QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 7 BELOW. COMPARE YOUR ANSWERS
WITH THOSE IN THE SOLUTION FOLLOWING THIS EXERCISE. IF YOU DO
NOT SCORE 70% OR HIGHER, YOU SHOULD REVIEW THE MATERIAL ON
PAGES SH-1-6 thru SH-1-13 AT APPENDIX C.)

1. Peter Drucker stated, "communication is the act of the recipient." What did he mean?
(5 pts)

_____
_____
_____

2. We can better understand the complexity of communications if we consider the
following statement, "No two people view the world in exactly the same way." What
does that mean in terms of the communication process? (5pts)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Explain how you can increase the agreement between the source and receiver about
the meanings of symbols. (5 pts)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Five individual differences between the source and receiver have been found to be
particularly troublesome in the communications process.   Explain how each of the
following individual differences negatively influences the communication process:

a. self-identity   (4 pts)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. role   (4 pts)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c. value   (4 pts)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

d. mood   (4 pts)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

e. motive   (4 pts)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5. In addition to the five major factors listed in question 4 above, the following factors affect the way the source and receiver communicate. Give an illustration of how each of the following can interfere with the communications process.

a.   socio-economic (4 pts) _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b.   religious   (4 pts)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c.   cultural   (4 pts)_____
_____
_____
_____

d.   age differences(4 pts)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

6. Define the term "nonverbal communication" (5 pts) and give at least three examples
of nonverbal communication cues and the influence each type of cue has on the
communication process. _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

7. Answer the following questions: (4 pts each)

a. What factors influence face-to-face communications? Place these factors in order of
their influence (facial, vocal, verbal) in oral communication._____
_____
_____

b. What are the factors which have the most influence on written
communication?_____
_____
_____

c. What happens when our nonverbal communications do not support our verbal
communication?_____
_____
_____
_____

d.   What part can active listening play in the communication process?
_____
_____
_____

e.   What is the relationship between active listening and feedback?
_____
_____
_____

SOLUTION TO LESSON EXERCISE 2

SOURCE/RECEIVER DIFFERENCES: THE DISTORTION OF MEANING.

(IF YOU DO NOT SCORE 70% OR HIGHER, YOU SHOULD REVIEW THE
LESSON MATERIALS YOU JUST COVERED ON PAGES SH-1-6 thru SH-1-13 AT
APPENDIX C.)

1. Peter Drucker stated, "communication is the act of the recipient." What did he mean?
(5pts)
It is a warning that the communication process has not been completed unless the
intended meaning has been understood by the intended receiver.   SH-1-6

2. We can better understand the complexity of communications if we consider the
following statement, "No two people view the world in exactly the same way." What
does that mean in terms of the communication process? (5 pts)
It means that the message is shaped by the recipient's experiences. If the sender and the
receiver have drastically different backgrounds, the message received is probably not
going to be the one the sender intended. The sender has to plan for background
differences. SH-1-6

3. Explain how you can increase the agreement about the meanings of symbols between
the source and the receiver. (5 pts)
If you want to communicate with others having different experiences, you need to
enhance the common experiences. Couch the message in terms and experiences to which
the recipient can relate. SH-1-6

4. Five individual differences between the source and receiver have been found to be
particularly troublesome in the communication process. Explain how each of the
following individual differences negatively influences the communications process:
 (4 pts each)
        a. Self-identity.   The source must be aware that not everyone views themselves
the same. For example, if the source has a high need for recognition, he/she must be
aware that not everyone wants to be the center of attention. The sender must be sure that
recognition is in keeping with the receiver's actions and not excessive for the situation.
        b. Role.   If the recipient does not have the same understanding of his/her role as
does the source, the source (leader) may communicate taskings which are not in keeping
with the recipient's understanding of his/her role. The recipient may view the tasking as
inappropriate, punishment or as special recognition--none of which was intended by the
source. The recipient's view of his/her role in the organization will color his/her
responsiveness to the tasking communication.
        c. Value systems. An individual's behavior is influenced by his/her value
systems. For example, individuals who value the organization are more willing to spend
more of their time working for the organization. The leader must recognize value

differences and the impact which these differences can have in the way a message is received.

       d. Mood. The reception of a message may depend on differences in how the recipient and the sender are feeling or perceiving the world. Conditions, such as stress or unusual working hours may require a change in the method a message is normally formatted.

       e. Motive. Differences in motive cause individuals to react to the same message in different ways. For example, the recipient who sees that he/she can gain from an action will react with far more enthusiasm than the recipient who does not see personal (or desire) personal gain as a result of the effort. SH-1-7 and SH-1-8

5.   In addition to the five major factors listed in question 4 above, the following factors affect the way the source and receiver communicate. Give an illustration of how each of the following can interfere with the communications process: (4 pts each)

   a. Socio-economic. Exposure to education and other opportunities may have been influenced by your socio-economic background. These experiences color the way that you will react to issues. If the communication does not fit into your reality, you will reject it.

   b. Religious. Same as above.

   c. Cultural. Same as above.

   d. Age differences. Age difference results in individuals having different education, job progression, social experiences, etc. These differences color how information is decoded. When you are dealing with different age groups or with groups having a range of age differences, you must be aware of how the age differences can influence the way a message is received and interpreted. Age differences will change the reality. SH-1-9

6.   Define the term "nonverbal communication" (5 pts). Give at least three examples of nonverbal communications cues and the influence which each type of cue has on the communication process (Give yourself 4 points for each type of cue correctly identified and 4 points for each correct explanation of how that cue can affect the communication process.).

Nonverbal communication is the portion of a message which is nonverbal. Several types of nonverbal cues are discussed in the readings. If you discussed any of the nonverbal cues including facial expressions, body language, voice, tone, inflections, etc., and explained that the nonverbal aspect will determine the message sent in one-to-one communication situations, give yourself credit for this question. SH-1-10

7.   Answer the following questions: (4 pts each)

   a. What factors influence face-to-face communications? Place these factors in order of influence (facial, vocal, verbal) in oral communications Facial (55%), vocal (38%), and verbal (7%) SH-1-9

   b. What are the important factors in written communications? The words we select and how we group the words are extremely important, as they stand alone in written communications. Paper used and media (pen, type, crayon) can also influence the message received if it varies from the norm. SH-1-10

    c. What happens when our nonverbal communications do not support our verbal communications? <u>The nonverbal communications will be the primary focus and will influence the message received.</u> SH-1-12

    d. What part can active listening play in the communications process? <u>Active listening involves reacting to the message being received and provides an opportunity for the listener to clarify any issues or questions resulting from the message being sent. Active listening techniques can improve the chance that the message received is the message sent.</u> SH-1-12 and SH-1-13

LESSON EXERCISE 3, PART 3

COMMUNICATIONS IN ORGANIZATIONS

(ANSWER QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 10 BELOW. COMPARE YOUR ANSWERS WITH THOSE IN THE SOLUTION FOLLOWING THIS EXERCISE. IF YOU DO NOT SCORE 70% OR HIGHER, YOU SHOULD REVIEW THE MATERIAL ON PAGES SH-1-14 thru SH-1-18 AT APPENDIX C.)

Each question is worth 10 points.

1   In an organization, communication flows upward, downward and laterally. It has been said that the leader is in a "linking-pin" position in the organizational communication flow. What does this mean?_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

2. List three purposes of downward communication. _____

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Why does downward communication have the greatest potential for misinterpretation?_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

4.   Define commonality and explain how commonality can help reduce the problems of downward communication._____

_____
_____
_____
_____

5. What is upward communication?_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

6. Upward communication produces more effective organizations. Identify two of the factors which have a negative impact on upward communication? How do these factors interfere with the communication process?_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

7. In comparing upward and downward communication, one study finds that leaders are less willing to expose themselves to superiors than to subordinates, but they seek more feedback from superiors than from subordinates. What does this tell you about communication in an organization? How would communication differ if the tendencies were reversed?_____

_____
_____
_____
_____

8. Define lateral communication. Why does lateral communication occur more frequently than vertical communication in an organization? Why does it tend to be less distorted than vertical communication? _____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9. A strict hierarchical organization (as illustrated by a typical military wiring diagram) discourages lateral communication. Why? _____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

10. What is the grapevine? How does the information tend to flow in a grapevine? What benefit is there in using a grapevine? How can you, as a leader, make use of the grapevine?_____

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

SOLUTION TO LESSON EXERCISE 3

COMMUNICATIONS IN ORGANIZATIONS

(IF YOU DO NOT SCORE 70% OR HIGHER, YOU SHOULD REVIEW THE
LESSON MATERIALS YOU JUST COVERED ON PAGES SH-1-14 thru SH-1-18,
APPENDIX C.)

Each question is worth 10 points.
1. In an organization, communication flows upward, downward and lateral. It has been
said that the leader is in a "linking-pin" position in the organizational communications
flow. What does this mean? The leader is in a position to be affected by and to affect the
communications flow from any direction: upward, downward and laterally. SH-1-14

2. List three purposes of downward communication. Downward communications
provides instructions, guidance, direction to subordinates, and may also disseminate
rules, procedures and routine information for administrative housekeeping. SH-1-14

3. Why does downward communication have the greatest potential for misinterpretation?
The relative speed of the communication process is faster and leaves less time and
opportunity for adequate feedback. SH-1-15

4. Define commonality and explain how commonality can help reduce the problems of
downward communication.   Commonality refers to shared experiences or experiences
which are similar. Since downward communication is rapid and is often the critical
information which must get down in an emergency, commonality can be increased by
providing ample opportunity for individuals to train together and work together. The
more commonality of the experiences, the more likely that the rapid downward
communication will be correctly received. Without commonality, the exclusive use of
downward communication can be hazardous to the leader. SH-1-15

5. What is upward communication? Under the cybernetic model, upward
communication is the feedback that a leader receives from his/her subordinates or a
message initiated at a lower level in the organization. SH-1-15

6. Upward communication produces more effective organizations. What, then, are two
of the factors which cause upward communication to be unsatisfactory in an
organization? How do these factors interfere with the communication process? Upward
communication provides feedback to the leader . It is this feedback that allows
corrections to be made in the communication process. Two factors which cause upward
communication to be unsatisfactory in an organization are: (1) In a hierarchical
organization, communication tends to flow downward and are directive in nature. This
tendency towards downward communication limits the opportunity for upward
communication . (2) There is a tendency to omit negative information in our
communication with superiors. Therefore, upward communication tends to result in

"sanitized" messages to the leader. Thus, the leader does not get the total message he/she needs. SH-1-16

7.   In comparing upward and downward communication, one study finds that leaders are less willing to expose themselves to superiors than with subordinates, but they seek more feedback from superiors than from subordinates. What does this tell you about communications in an organization? Reversal of the tendencies would affect the communication in what manner?   Basically it tells you that leaders are willing to open themselves up more to their subordinates but do not want feedback from the subordinates. In effect, there is a tendency for leaders to be more concerned about how the superior views them and their work. By closing off feedback from subordinates, leaders do not obtain needed and essential feedback. This approach continues the "sanitizing" of information subordinates send forward and results in the leader not being informed about issues to which he/she should attend. Reversing the tendency would allow for more open communication thereby increasing the likelihood that communications with the leader would be more open and informative and not "what the subordinate thinks the old man wants to hear." SH-1-16 and SH-1-17

8.   Define lateral communication. Why does lateral communication occur more frequent than vertical communication in an organization? Why does it tend to be less distorted than vertical communication?   Lateral communication is horizontal moving between positions of relatively equal responsibility and authority in the organizational structure. It tends to be more common than upward or downward because it does not tend to be associated with rewards and punishments and tends to involve individuals with the same frame of reference. This tends to result in a less distorted message. SH-1-17

9.   A strict hierarchical communication system (as illustrated by a typical military wiring diagram) discourages lateral communications. Why? Under a strictly hierarchical system, information should flow up the chain of command to a common superior who then has the authority to disperse the information back down the chain to the intended recipient. Communication becomes very controlled as a result.   SH-1-17

10. What is the grapevine? How does information tend to flow in a grapevine? What benefit is there in using a grapevine? How can you, as a leader, make use of the grapevine?   The grapevine is an informal information system. It often arises because of the limitations of the vertical communication process. In the grapevine, information flows across organizational lines following informal groups. The grapevine is normally more rapid and flexible. The grapevine is going to exist in an organization. The leader who realizes the existence and benefit of the grapevine can use it to ensure that the information it provides is correct. The grapevine can also be used to augment the more formal communication processes.   SH-1-17 and SH-1-18

LESSON EXERCISE 4, PART 4

**STRATEGIES FOR SOLVING ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS
PROBLEMS**

(ANSWER QUESTIONS 1 THROUGH 5 BELOW. COMPARE YOUR ANSWERS
WITH THOSE IN THE SOLUTION FOLLOWING THIS EXERCISE. IF YOU DO
NOT SCORE 70% OR HIGHER, YOU SHOULD REVIEW THE MATERIAL ON
PAGES SH-1-19 thru SH-1-25 AT APPENDIX C.)

1. Define data overload (4 points). Briefly describe what happens to the communication
process in cases of data overload (4 points). Summarize four ways that you, as a leader,
can account for data overload and reduce its influence on your communication efforts.
(4 points each)

_____
_____
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_____
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_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

2. Define message distortion. (4 points) Discuss how each of the approaches listed
below (a-e) can help you, as the leader, overcome message distortion._____
_____
_____
_____
_____

a. Subordinate knows organizational goals/objectives. (4 points)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. Subordinate knows where he/she fits into the organization. (4 points)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c. Subordinate participates in policy formulation. (4 points) _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

d. Redundancy. (4 points)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

e. Brief back. (4 points) _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Define incomplete feedback. How is it a communication problem? (6 points)
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. What is the most important thing that a leader can do to foster the type of feedback
desired? (5 points) _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

5. If the leader wants to change the climate from defensiveness to a more open one,
there are several organizational dimensions through which he/she can affect the climate.
The identified dimensions are listed below. Define each of the dimensions and give one
example of how the leader can address each of the dimensions to encourage the
development of a supportive organizational climate.

a. Degree of Evaluativeness. (6 points)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

b. Degree of Control. (6 points)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

c. Degree of Spontaneity. (6 points)_____
_____
_____
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_____

d. Degree of Empathy. (6 points) _____
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_____
_____
_____
_____

e. Degree of Equality. (6 points)_____
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_____
_____
_____

f. Degree of Certainty. (6 points)_____
_____
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_____
_____

g. Describe a situation where your leader set up a climate of defensiveness. What did
he/she do and how did it affect the work-environment? (5 points)_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

SOLUTION TO LESSON EXERCISE 4

**<u>STRATEGIES FOR SOLVING ORGANIZATION COMMUNICATIONS
PROBLEMS</u>**

(IF YOU DO NOT SCORE 70% OR HIGHER, YOU SHOULD REVIEW THE
LESSON MATERIALS YOU JUST COVERED ON PAGES SH-1-19 thru SH-1-25 AT
APPENDIX C.)

1. Define data overload (4 points). Briefly describe what happens to the communication
process in cases of data overload (4 points). Summarize four ways that you, as a leader,
can account for data overload and reduce its influence on your communication efforts (4
points each). <u>Data overload is when the leaders receive so much data input that they
cannot adequately identify the relevant information. Data overload can lead to confusion,
poor decisions, frustration, and, in extreme cases, a complete breakdown of the
communication process. There are several steps which the leader can take to help reduce
the effects of data overload. First the leader can funnel data to the correct person
protecting those who do not need the data from data overload. Second, the leader can use
gatekeepers to filter and summarize incoming data and make routine decisions. This
action releases some of the potential for leadership data overload. Third, the leader can
"que" information. This involves postponing low priority communications until a more
convenient time. Fourth, the leader can review the need for compiled data and eliminate
the data requirements not relevant to the organization.</u> SH-1-19 thru SH-1-21

2. Define message distortion (4 points). Discuss how each of the approaches listed
below (a-e) can help you, as the leader, overcome message distortion (4 points each).
<u>Message distortion is a difference in the intended and perceived meanings of the
message.</u> SH-1-21

    a. Subordinate knows organizational goals/objectives (4 points). <u>Knowledge of
organizational goals and objectives helps the subordinate interpret a directive properly if
he/she can see how the information fits into the larger organizational picture.</u> SH-1-21

    b. Subordinate knows where he/she fits into the organization (4 point). <u>Knowing
where he/she fits into an organization makes it more likely that the subordinate will
correctly interpret the information.</u> SH-1-21

    c. Subordinate participates in policy formulation (4 points). <u>Personnel who
participate in the formulation of policy better understand the policy and are less likely to
misinterpret it.</u> SH-1-21

    d. Redundancy (4 points). <u>Providing information over more than one
communications channel increases the likelihood that the information will be received by
the intended receivers and will be properly interpreted.</u> SH-1-21

e.   Brief back (4 points).   Requiring a brief back allows the leader to determine if there is confusion about points in the priority message he/she disseminated and provides an opportunity for the leader to resolve any miscommunications.   SH-1-21 and SH-1-22

3.   Define incomplete feedback. How is it a communication problem? (5 points) Incomplete feedback encompasses several problems associated with both downward and upward communication within an organization. Incomplete feedback is the most common type of feedback. It occurs when the subordinate only delivers information which he/she thinks the leader wants to hear and does not include any negative or problem information. It is a communication problem in that the leader does not really know the true status of the organization and must make decisions based on this incomplete information.   SH-1-22

4.   What is the most important thing that a leader can do to foster the type of feedback desired?
(6 points)   Probably the most important thing that a leader can do to foster feedback is to reduce the defensiveness normally existing in an organizational climate. The defensiveness can cause subordinates to hold back comments, and to hide mistakes, to enter into win-lose situations and to attempt to dominate, impress and escape.   SH-1-22

5.   If the leader wants to change the climate from defensiveness to a more open one, there are several organizational dimensions through which he/she can affect the climate. The identified dimensions are listed below. Define each of the dimensions and give one example of how the leader can address each of the dimensions to encourage the development of a supportive organizational climate.

a.   Degree of Evaluativeness (6 points).   Evaluativeness involves leader-subordinate communication being frequently directed at evaluating the work of subordinates. One way to reduce evaluativeness is to increase statements which describe the situation such as "I noticed that you didn't finish the report on time" rather than evaluative ones. The individual is not as likely to feel that he/she is being accused of something.   SH-1-23

b.   Degree of Control (6 points).   The degree of control is how much direction and monitoring the leader does of his/her subordinates. Leaders who over control and are directive tend to generate defensiveness on the part of subordinates. Communications and openness will suffer as a result. One way that the leader can avoid this situation is to work with the subordinates using a problem-solving approach. For example, instead of saying "You missed the whole point!" you would approach the subordinate with a statement such as "What other factors do you think we should consider in our response?" The second approach is much more likely to reduce defensiveness.   SH-1-23

c.   Degree of Spontaneity (6 points).   Spontaneity is similar to "on-time training". The issue is addressed as needed, rather than on a rigid schedule. This cuts down on "busy"and "incomplete" work. One approach is for the subordinate and leader to agree that they will work together on an "as needed" basis. There will still be a completion

date but there would not be meetings about the project unless it is determined to be necessary.   SH-1-23 and SH-1-24

    d.   Degree of Empathy (6 points).   Empathy is being understanding and concerned. One way you can increase your subordinates' feeling that you are empathetic is to deal with them in a less accusatory manner. For example, if an employee is late to work you might ask if there was a problem which caused them to be late rather than asking them directly why they were late. Putting subordinates on the defensive sets up a barrier in the communications process.   SH-1-24

    e.   Degree of Equality (6 points).   Equality in an organization is providing subordinates the opportunity to express their ideas and provide their input. Leaders who have "all of the correct answers" establish environments where subordinates are not open and do not feel that they are held in high esteem or value. The subordinates are less likely to contribute their expertise when treated as a "lesser" player.   SH-1-24

    f.   Degree of Certainty (6 points).   The degree of certainty is the extent to which the leader "knows all of the answers." The leader does not want input from subordinates. Statements made by authoritarian leaders arouse defensiveness in subordinates. One way that leaders can avoid certainty is to make statements which allow for other input such as the following: "I have some ideas about how we can solve the problem, but I am interested in your recommendations."   SH-1-25

6.   Describe a situation where your leader set up a climate of defensiveness (5 points). What did he/she do and how did it affect the work environment? The response is personal but one of the degrees in question 5 should be identified.

LESSON EXERCISE 5, PART V

MAKING THE MESSAGE CONVINCING

As a leader, you are often expected to persuade your subordinates and stimulate them to act in a particular way or to change their attitudes toward some aspect of communication. The material contained in this section provided an opportunity for you to become familiar with the characteristics of the source, message, and receiver that influence how well subordinates respond to your message. Familiarity with this information is important. For this section, you are required to summarize the material using the outline format below:

Grading: This is a "GO", "NO GO" exercise. If you fail to cover any of the outline components, you should consider your performance a "NO GO" and should go back and redo the assignment.

I. Source Characteristics.
    A. Credibility.
        1. Define credibility.
        2. Describe how the source characteristic influences the leader's ability to persuade others.
        3. Explain how the leader can overcome communication barriers associated with this characteristic.
    B. Intention of the Source.
        1. Define intention of the source.
        2. Describe how the intention of the source characteristic influences the leader's ability to persuade others.
        3. Explain how the leader can overcome communication barriers associated with this characteristic.
    C. Liking and similarity.
        1. Define liking and similarity.
        2. Describe how the characteristics of liking and similarity influence the leader's ability to persuade others.
        3. Explain how the leader can overcome communication barriers associated with this characteristic.

II. Characteristics of the message.
    A. Discrepancy from current position.
        1. Define discrepancy from current position.
        2. Describe how the characteristics of the message influence the leader's ability to persuade others.
        3. Explain how the leader can overcome communication barriers associated with the characteristics of the message.

B. Structure of the message.
    1. Define structure of the message.
    2. Describe how the structure of the message influences the leader's ability to persuade others.
    3. Explain how the leader can overcome communication barriers associated with the structure of the message.
C. Novelty of the Information.
    1. Define novelty of the information.
    2. Describe how the novelty of the information influences the leader's ability to persuade others.
    3. Explain how the leader can overcome communication barriers associated with the characteristic, novelty of the information.

III. Characteristics of the receiver.
A. Arousal.
    1. Define arousal.
    2. Describe how the arousal characteristic influences the leader's ability to persuade others.
    3. Explain how the leader can overcome communication barriers associated with the arousal characteristic.
B. Personality.
    1. Define personality.
    2. Describe how the characteristic of personality influences the leader's ability to persuade others.
    3. Explain how the leader can overcome communication barriers associated with the personality characteristic.
C. Commitment and Volition.
    1. Define commitment and volition.
    2. Describe how the characteristics of commitment and volition influence the leader's ability to persuade others.
    3. Explain how the leader can overcome communication barriers associated with the characteristic of volition and commitment.

C651 COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING EXERCISE 6

DIRECTIONS: Read the following questions. Answer them as completely as possible.
Responses should be in essay format and be written in the standard Army writing style.
You may use your readings and notes to assist you in answering the questions; this is an
independent exercise.

QUESTIONS

The questions at 1a - 1c are taken from the case study on the next page. Read the
case study before you attempt to answer these questions.

a. What do you think caused the division chiefs to react as they did to the required
meeting?

b. What impact did the wording of the memorandum have on the group? Rewrite the
memorandum to make it more positive.

c. Discuss at least three actions that COL Jones can take to improve the
communication process in his/her directorate.

CASE STUDY
(Basis for questions 1a-c)

Your director spoke with his executive officer, MAJ Jones, and said, "We've got some problems with the training division. Apparently they are not going to be able to meet our internal suspense for the Human Relations Training Support Package (TSP). It appears that they will meet the TRADOC milestone, but that leaves the field with a very short implementation suspense. We must avoid this kind of situation in the future. I want you to establish a weekly meeting where I can sit down with the division chiefs and brainstorm solutions to problems within the divisions. Put out a memo."

MAJ Jones put out the following memorandum to the division chiefs:

MEMORANDUM   9 September 19XX

TO: Division Chiefs

SUBJECT: Weekly meeting

1. COL Jones directed that I establish a weekly meeting to be attended by each of you and COL Jones. The topic for discussion will be the problems which each of the divisions are having and how you can work together to solve the problems.

2. The first meeting is scheduled for 0900, 12 September 19XX in the conference room.

3. Contact me if you have any questions.

                                        MAJOR JONES
                                        MAJ, XX
                                        XO, XXXX

The division meeting was a disaster. The atmosphere was uncomfortable and no one wanted to discuss his/her division. COL Jones called on the chief of the training division first. He asked if he/she was having any problems and if any of the other division chiefs could give him/her assistance with the problems.

As one can expect, the Chief, Training Division, said that there were no serious problems that he/she could not handle and expressed concern that someone had been going above his/her head to the director spreading false rumors. The other chiefs expressed support for the chief of the training division as none of them wanted to air their problems in front of others.

COL Jones emphasized that the purpose of the meetings was to share ideas and solutions to problems. After one more meeting, the meetings were discontinued.

COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING EXERCISE 6 SOLUTION QUESTIONS:

1.   (Questions 1a-c are based on the case study)

1a. Discuss what you think caused the division chiefs to react as they did to the required meeting?

ANSWER: **The student must note that the memorandum implied that there were problems with the leadership abilities of the division chiefs (can also be viewed as leadership competence problems). The communication is "top-down" and as such is viewed as authoritarian or voicing the opinion of the superior (in this case is taken to be negative towards the division chiefs). Given the tendency for leaders to be more concerned about how the superior views them and their work, this message is probably interpreted as indicating that the division chiefs are not performing effectively and need assistance in doing their job.**

1b. What impact did the wording of the memorandum have on the group? Rewrite the memorandum to make it more positive.

ANSWER: **The division chiefs became defensive and hesitant to participate. They indicated that they thought that someone may have been going to the director to complain about them/or their leadership.**

Rewrite should be positive and open--response should indicate that the director would like to improve the performance of the directorate and would like to get input from the division chiefs. Also, the response should indicate that the director wants to increase cooperation and communications between the divisions and would like to get the division chiefs' ideas as to how they can effectively accomplished it.

1c. Discuss at least three actions that COL Jones might take to improve the communications process in his/her directorate.

ANSWER: **(1) Promote lateral communications . One way is to encourage the divisions to work together. Assigning a joint project may facilitate that solution. (This also provides a common basis from which the divisions can work to develop a common background.) Also, the director can take advantage of the grapevine and informal communications channels.**

(2) Encourage openness and two-way feedback. Reward factual and accurate feedback. Allow leaders to give negative feedback--have them provide suggested solutions for the problems identified. Ask them for input and recommendations to resolve issues.

(3) After disseminating important information, ask for feedback.

(4) Eliminate the "zero defect" mentality in the organization -- except for life and death situations.

(If the student provides a response that is reasonable and sound, count it as correct. Ideas such as attention to language used, sending message through more than one message channel, and follow-up on message sent are examples.)

APPENDIX C

STUDENT HANDOUTS

INDEX OF STUDENT HANDOUTS

This Appendix Contains

This Appendix contains the items listed in this table---

Title/Synopsis	Pages
SH-1, The Cybernetic Communication Model	SH-1-1 thru SH-1-31

STUDENT HANDOUT 1

DIRECTIONS   The reading material for this lesson is in this student homework packet. You are to read the materials and answer the questions in the Lesson Exercise for each Enabling Learning Objective (ELO) at Appendix B. You should try to answer the questions *without referring* back to the reading material. You will find the correct answers in the Solution/Discussion section after the Lesson Exercise for that ELO at Appendix B. You should strive to score a minimum of 80% on each section Lesson Exercise. If you do not score 80%, you should go back and review the material you missed. Each answer will refer to the appropriate page in the TSP. The material covered here, will be the basis for the Phase I final examination.

Communi-cation   Examples of communication failures and the effects of these failures can be found throughout history. In these extreme cases, miscommunication can result in extensive loss of life and property.

Introduction   In an organizational or interpersonal sense, miscommunication can often be no less disastrous in terms of intended organizational outcomes.

Communication has been described as the "thread that holds the various interpersonal parts of an organization together." Yet, as organizational leaders we frequently do a notoriously poor job of communicating.

The leader's job cannot be accomplished without effective communication with subordinates peers and superiors. This makes us ask what we can learn about the communication process that can help us be better communicators.

We begin by examining how communication between individuals takes place and what factors affect the quality of that interaction. We will discuss how differences or similarities among the people involved in communication affect the process and whether the nonverbal component of communication influences the transfer of meaning to the extent suggested in popular literature.

Then we will examine the organizational environment to determine how it limits or enhances the effectiveness of communication. We will take a close look at selected strategies to help the leader respond to specific organizational communication problems. We will examine some aspects of the communication process that help make the leader a more convincing communicator.

The final section of the paper is concerned with active listening and how active listening can help you, as a leader, communicate more effectively.

| **ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE 1:** | Identify the components of the Cybernetic Communication Model. |

The Cybernetic Communication Model

"*That's not really what I meant*!"
　　　"*But, I told them to. . . .*"
　　　"*You must have been mistaken.*"
　　　"*I thought you meant. . . .*"
All of these common phrases serve notice that something has failed in the communication process.

Leader Implications

Such miscommunications can be inconvenient when they occur in casual conversation. However, they can have far-reaching implications for the leader if such problems occur in your unit. With this problem in mind, we will look more closely at the possible sources of communication problems that we encounter in our units.

Definition

Communication can be defined as the process of transferring information from one person to another.

Three Basic Elements

Each transfer of information involves at least three basic elements:
- a SOURCE (or sender) of the communication,
- a MESSAGE to be transmitted,
- a RECEIVER--either a subordinate, a senior, or a fellow soldier the source feels needs the information.

The source or sender is the originator of the message or communication effort.

The message, of course, is influenced both by the content of the communication (the information to be transmitted) and the means of transmitting the content (voice, written, picture, or so on).

The receiver is the audience for whom the message was intended or the person who receives the information.

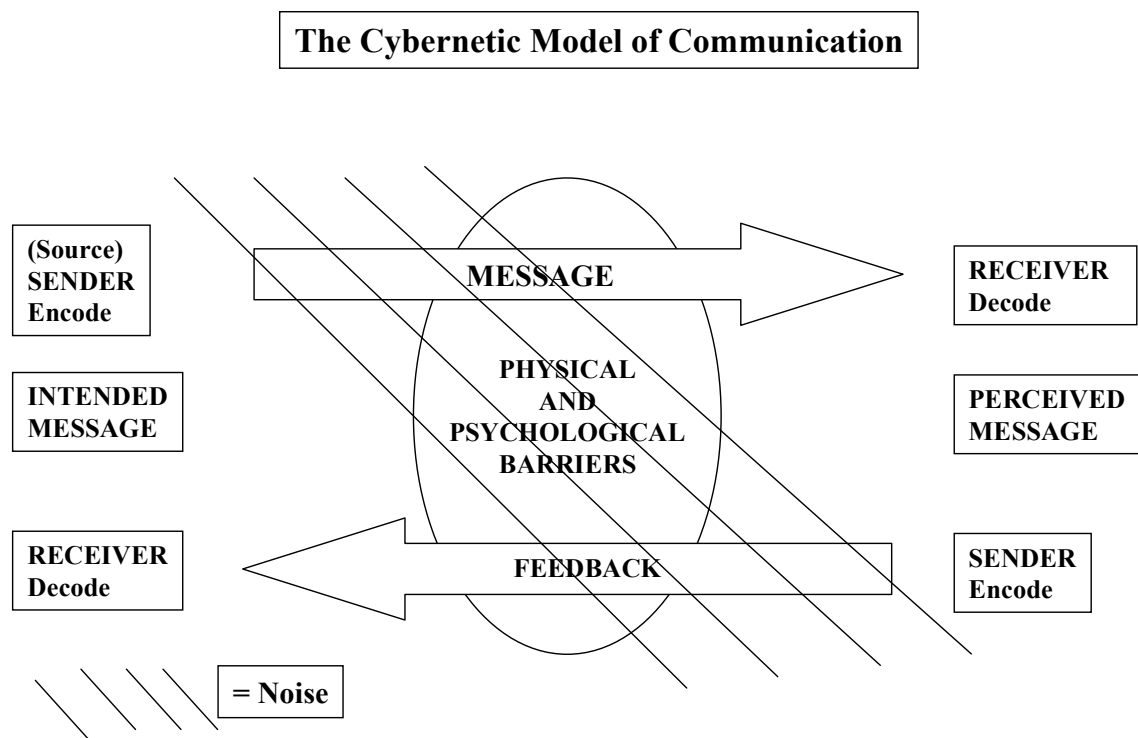Each of these elements is a potential source of communication failure.

The Cybernetic Model of Communication

(Source) SENDER Encode

MESSAGE

RECEIVER Decode

INTENDED MESSAGE

PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS

PERCEIVED MESSAGE

RECEIVER Decode

FEEDBACK

SENDER Encode

= Noise

Figure 1, The Cybernetic Communication Model

The Model,   The simple communications model above, figure 1, shows the chain of
Discussion   events that takes place when the source initiates a communication.
                    According to this diagram, the process begins with an intended message
                    (something which the source feels needs to be communicated to another).

Encode   To add substance and meaning to the intended message, the source must
                    encode this message into commonly accepted symbols, all of which, are
                    thought to be understood by the receiver.

Symbols   In this context, a symbol merely means something that stands for something
                    else. Selected words or phrases, expressions, and tones are all examples of
                    symbols a source uses to encode a message.

                    For instance, the words: "You messed up!," coming from a superior may be
                    symbolic of the message that the subordinate failed to satisfy the
                    expectations of the superior.

                    A pointed finger may be a symbolic emphasis to that statement, while a
                    raised voice may symbolize added emphasis.

Message   The message, then, is the composite of all the symbols as they are
Channel   assembled and processed by the source to convey the intended thought or
                    idea. The source consciously or unconsciously selects the message channel
                    with which to convey the message: face-to-face, written, telephonic, or
                    whatever the sender deems most simple or appropriate. Sometimes the
                    channel is dictated by such events as distance, status, or organizational
                    procedures.

Decode   Upon receipt of the message, the receiver decodes it by mentally sorting out
                    the often conflicting symbols and interpreting them. For instance, the
                    above communication (exclamatory comment, pointed finger and raised
                    voice) accompanied by a smile on the sender's face may be interpreted as a
                    joke rather than a reprimand.

                    In putting all of the symbols together within the constraints of the particular
                    psychological environment, the **perceived message** is received.

Feedback   To complete the process, the receiver responds in some way, thereby
                    providing feedback to the source as to how the original message is received,
                    interpreted, and acted upon. In the case of our sample communication, the
                    feedback may be a quizzical look, a nervous gesture, or some type of verbal
                    acknowledgment. In actuality, this feedback completes the cybernetic (or
                    self-correcting) loop for the sender, who may now respond to the feedback
                    received.

Feedback also constitutes a process reversal in which the sequence just described begins again. That is, with feedback the receiver becomes the source, encoding and sending a message back to the original source.

If the receiver of our sample communication returns a message of disgust or lack of appropriate concern, or if the receiver misinterprets the source's smile, this would probably stimulate another message from the source to clarify or add more emphasis to the communication.

Noise   The sequence as described thus far is rather simplistic. Only when we consider the noise in the system (distortions, disruptions and breakdowns that are part of the transmission process), do we begin to recognize the true complexity of the communication process.

Noise, which results primarily from source/receiver differences and unintended supplemental nonverbal communications, takes communication out of the realm of common sense.

We will discuss communication noise further in the next section.

<u>COMPLETE LESSON EXERCISE 1, AT APPENDIX B</u>

ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE 2	Identify the factors that distort meaning in the communication process.

The Distortion of Meaning

If a leader is to be a successful communicator, the interpersonal nature of the communication process must be understood. Too often we concern ourselves solely with how we send a message and ignore the reception of the message.

As organizational leaders, little is accomplished if we send instructions, which are not accurately received and implemented. Peter Drucker, a noted management consultant states that in reality, "communication is the act of the recipient."

This statement forewarns us that communication is not complete unless

the _intended meaning_ is _understood_ by the _intended receiver_.

Source/Receiver Differences

We can understand better the complexity of the communication process if we recall the following point:
   "No two people view the world in exactly the same way."
To put it another way, our perceptions are unique to us and reflect the sum total of the experience that constitutes our reality. In turn, what others see or hear is likewise bound by their experience.

Symbols and Meaning

This issue has significance for communication when we recall that the source selects and arranges symbols to construct a message that represents a thought or idea. In doing so, the source usually presumes that the receiver attaches the sender's meaning to each symbol and therefore will interpret the message exactly as the sender intends.

Common Symbols

As soldiers, we are able to overcome many of our communication difficulties on a technical level because we have a common vocabulary, or a common set of symbols. If I tell a soldier to meet me at his tank in the motor pool, I have every expectation that he will be standing by a tank in the motor pool; not by his car in the parking lot.

We share the same meaning for "tank" and "motor pool".

We also use the 24 hour clock to tell time, which eliminates another potential communication problem. With the 24 hour clock, we have only one 12 o'clock noon each day. This is also the reason we attempt to standardize terms among our allies.

Common
Vocabulary

A common vocabulary reduces the possibility of communication problems resulting in battlefield tragedies. In reality, unless you take special steps, individual differences in the experiences and background of the source and the receiver rarely allow a one-to-one correspondence between the intended message and the perceived message.

If reality has different meaning for each individual, how are we able to communicate at all? How do we achieve any agreement on the meaning of the symbols we use in structuring our messages?

Common
Experience

Communications theorists point out that while each experience is unique to the individual, you will enhance communication to the degree that there is common experience among people. It seems reasonable, then, that if we want to increase our ability to communicate, we will look for ways to increase the commonality between ourselves and the receivers.

For example, in attempting to explain the effect of psychological stress on a human being to a person who has limited knowledge of the functioning of the human body, we may experience considerable difficulty.

Yet, if we can draw on some common frame of reference, such as an experience of faintness or depression following some particularly disturbing news, or the effect of extending a rubber band beyond its limits of elasticity, we may increase the transfer of meaning considerably.

Differences
Between Senders
and Receivers

What are the differences between source and receiver that are particularly troublesome to communicators? Researchers in the field of communications have classified individual differences into five general categories: differences in:
- self-identity,
- role,
- value,
- mood,
- motive.

We will examine each of these more closely.

In studying the individual it is apparent that differences exist in the way people view themselves and the challenges presented to them. Consider the following case.

A leader with a high need for achievement sends a message to a subordinate, presuming that the message will be received with enthusiasm, since it presents an exciting challenge.

Self-Identity   The leader may fail to effectively communicate merely because the subordinate, who has a low need for achievement, perceives the message as a threat and thus reacts negatively to it.

Clearly such self-identity factors can have significant influence on the transfer of meaning. Source/receiver differences in the manner in which they perceive their roles can also have a complicating effect.

Role   For instance, a leader may send a message to a subordinate requiring him to perform a duty the leader believes is part of the subordinate's overall responsibilities. On the other hand, the subordinate, perceiving the role of subordinate differently, may consider the requirement to exceed his responsibilities.

Values   The ambiguity that results from this situation may lead to various unintended consequences. The subordinate may think:
"Why is he having me do this?" or
"What did I do to deserve this?"
In addition, differences in value systems may exist between the source and the receiver which lead to different interpretations of the same message.

Motive   The middle-aged subordinate with 15 years invested in the organization and a person with less than a year on the job may react differently to a request for support requiring personal sacrifices. If the leader presumes equal values (loyalty to the organization), the communication may fail again.

Clearly, differences in motive of the source and receiver can also cause miscommunication.

For instance, the leader, being in a "linking-pin" position, may appreciate pressure from above and therefore respond to the organization's need for compliance with a certain directive. Subordinates removed from such organizational pressures, and perhaps less committed to organizational goals, may respond differently to the same message.

Mood   Mood differences may also alter meaning between sender and receiver.

The level of stress experienced by the sender and receiver will affect the interpretation of the message.   A priority message might be received as merely routine.

Other Factors   In addition to these more formally defined criteria, there may also exist:

- socio-economic,
- political,
- religious,
- cultural, or even
- age differences

that affect the way in which the source and receiver interpret or attach meaning to various symbols.

Normally, combinations of these differences will add to the variation between the intended and perceived meaning of a message. A common response to a failed communication is:
"Oh, I didn't know that's what you meant."

Conclusion

Although we cannot do away with these individual differences, awareness of their existence is the first critical step in reducing problems caused by them. A prudent leader might ask a series of questions, such as:

- "Do I have the same motives as my subordinates?"
- "Might our value differences affect how they interpret a directive?"
- "Can I mentally put myself on the receiving end of my messages and see how I might react, say, as a 19 year-old whose world does not revolve totally around this organization?"
- "Because of my age or education, do I use terminology which is inappropriate to the intended receiver?"
- "Do differing role expectations between my subordinates and me cause different interpretations of the same message?"

A leader who can assess the potential differences between source and receiver is better able to complete and transmit messages in such a way as to reduce the possible gap between the intended and perceived message.

Nonverbal Communications   Differences between intended and perceived meaning of a message often result from the complexity of the message channel itself. Recall that the sender chooses various symbols to represent thoughts and ideas and tries to arrange these symbols in a way that makes sense and will be accurately perceived by the receiver.

Components of the Message   Too often we think of the message only in terms of the words we use. Actually, the verbal portion of a message constitutes only a small portion of the total message content. Albert Mehrabian, an authority in the field of nonverbal communications, has investigated the relative significance of different components of a message and finds that the total impact of an oral communication is:

- 7% verbal,
- 38% vocal,
- 55% facial.

Written   In written communication such as this text, the words we select and how we group the words are extremely important, as they stand alone in terms of message content. The reader:
- can go back and reread passages,
- stop and think about the content and,
- make notes or underline key ideas.

Face-to-Face   In face-to-face communication, however, the actual words themselves constitute only a small portion of the total content. The way in which we arrange and present these words:
- in terms of tone,
- rate, inflection,
- pauses and,
- facial expression

actually provide most of the message's content for the receiver.

Non-Verbal   Sometimes, words themselves cannot stand alone and are dependent on nonverbal components for true intent. "Isn't this just great," is a statement that could be an honest expression of joy or happiness over a given event. On the other hand, with appropriate tonal inflection, it could be loaded with sarcasm and meant instead to convey disgust or contempt over a distasteful situation.

In this case, the source's intent is almost totally dependent on the nonverbal components that accompany the words.

The study of nonverbal communications has given us some interesting insights into how we communicate with others and what our actions actually convey.

Non-Verbal Cues There are several nonverbal cues that help transmit our intended meaning. Among these are cues of:
- proximity or spatial distance,
- posture,
- facial expression,
- vocal tone and,
- appearance or dress.

Spatial Distance Spatial distance between communicators, for instance, is an important indicator of attitude between source and receiver. In conversation, we tend to stand farther away from people we do not know or do not like; and closer to those we do know or do like.

Also, we tend to maintain more distance between ourselves, and a person we perceive as higher in status. A person of high status maintains greater personal territorial access.

Posture   Posture also may indicate either liking or status.
                       We tend to relax (lean forward, maintain an open arm posture or have
                       direct body contact) with those we like.
                       However, we tend to become rigid and tense around those of greater
                       status or those whom we perceive as threatening.
                       We tend to relax only to a moderate degree around those whom we
                       consider our peers.

                       Those who perceive themselves as higher status generally are much more
                       relaxed in posture than lower status persons.

                       Strutting, expansiveness, standing (when others are sitting) and hands on
                       hips are all nonverbal cues of high status persons.

Facial   In addition, we reflect our responsiveness in a communicator interchange
Expressions   through spontaneous gestures, by shifting position and by moving closer
                       to the other person. Under facial cues, eye contact can also indicate the
                       degree of liking as can a positive facial expression.

                       We tend to maintain eye contact with those we like and avoid contact
                       with those we dislike. Further, high status persons exhibit less eye
                       contact than lower status persons. Also, we can transmit cues of
                       responsiveness by an expressive face.

Vocal Cues   Vocal cues also send messages of liking, status and responsiveness.
                       Lower status persons tend to have lower voice volume than do higher
                       status persons.

Dress   In addition, our dress usually sends a powerful nonverbal message.
                       High status persons may display appropriate ornaments, as in the military,
                       or outward signs such as the current executive style of clothing.

                       The terms "white collar" and "blue collar" reflect relative status in an
                       organization.

                       In the communication process between two people these nonverbal
                       indicators are critical. Although often unaware, we actually look for these
                       indicators as we listen to the message.

Congruence   If the nonverbal component of a message supports the verbal portion, it
Between Verbal   can reinforce the intended meaning of the message and assist the receiver
an d Non-Verbal   in properly decoding the message.

However, if we say one thing, but nonverbally transmit another, the receiver tends to give more credence to the nonverbal components. The leader who in an apathetic monotone voice exclaims: "This is important," clearly betrays his intended message.

Credibility A source that frequently sends contradictory messages, will loose credibility with subordinates.
Leaders can use nonverbal communications to enhance communication by consciously manipulating:
- spatial distance,
- posture
- eye contact

to reinforce the content of an intended message.

By practicing appropriate gestures, meaning can be reinforced for the receiver. Also, an awareness and critical self-analysis of the nonverbal aspects of communications by the source of the communication reduces the message ambiguity to the subordinates.

Non-Verbal Impact In discussing how to improve communication skills, we normally concentrate on the behavior of communication sources. Of equal or even greater importance, however, is the impact of the nonverbal communications on the leader as a receiver in the communication process.

The leader who is an ineffective receiver may fail to gather critical feedback and thus reduce the ability to control the communication process. For instance, when a subordinate responds to a question by stating that "things are fine," but does so in a monotone voice, with head down and a slight frown, this should trigger a response.

The Total Message Is the nonverbal portion of the communication undermining the reassuring words? In communicating orally with others, we need to focus attention on the total message—
- the words,
- the tone,
- the inflection,
- the pauses,
- the eye contact.

Doing this, however, is hard work.

Active Listening Active listening includes total mind and body involvement. In fact, an active listener will sense increased pulse rate, perspiration and other indications of physical stress. In addition, actively responding to messages received by returning appropriate nonverbal communications demonstrates that we are listening and receiving messages.

Head nods, eye contact, the absence of distracting activity (such as the shuffling of papers, finger tapping, looking at the time) all are nonverbal signs which provide feedback of active listening and interest.

COMPLETE LESSON EXERCISE 2 AT APPENDIX B

ENABLING LEARING OBJECTIVE 3:	Identify the communication paths in an organization.

COMMUNICA-TION IN ORGANIZA-TIONS

We have discussed the extent to which noise (barriers to communication), in the form of source/receiver differences and nonverbal communications, can influence the communication process.

We are now ready to focus on the organization itself as the principal environment in which the leader must communicate. What is there about the organizational environment that facilitates or hinders the communications process?

In any organization, communication can flow in one of three directions:

- downward (toward subordinates),
- upward (toward seniors) and
- laterally (toward peers).

It is important to recall here that the "linking-pin" position of the "leader", places the leader in a position to affect and to be affected by each of these three communication flows. Not only does the leader send communications in each of these directions, but also receives communications from subordinates, superiors and peers.

We will consider each form of communication in some detail.

Downward Communication

A typical organization chart will show the flow from senior to subordinate along a predetermined chain of authority. Downward communication is intended to provide:

- instructions,
- guidance, and
- direction to subordinates to assist them in meeting organizational objectives, and to
- disseminate rules,
- procedures, and
- routine information necessary for administrative housekeeping within the organization.

As such, *downward communication is primarily authoritative in nature*. It may consist of formalized written documents, routine briefings or meetings, or one-way, face-to-face verbal exchange between senior and subordinate. Generally, downward communication is rapid.

However, if we define communication effectiveness in terms of the accurate transfer of meaning from one person to another,

 downward communication has perhaps the greatest potential for misinterpretation.

Speed of Communication   For one thing, the relative speed of downward communication is usually accomplished at the expense of sufficient opportunity for feedback. As a result, the communicator may not know whether the intended meaning of the communication is understood in a way that results in appropriate action.

Shortcomings   This shortcoming of downward communication can be reduced to the extent that there is overlap or commonality between the source and the intended receiver. As discussed earlier, such commonality comes in part through shared experiences.

Where Speed is Essential   In organizations where rapid downward communication is essential to goal accomplishment, such as in the emergency work of military police or in the combat role of the military, *the longer people train and work together the less chance there is for misinterpreted downward communication*.

Commonality   Commonality enables the leader to know which subordinates can respond effectively to rapid downward communication, and which cannot. The leader also learns which subordinates will feed back cues of misunderstanding and which will not.

Until we have achieved a sense of commonality the exclusive use of downward communication can be a hazardous means of communication for a leader.

Upward Communication   In terms of the cybernetic model of communication, upward communication may constitute the feedback (verbal or nonverbal) which the leader receives from the subordinate, or it may be an intended message initiated at the lower level.

Like downward communication, upward flow can result from direct face-to-face verbal exchange between leader and subordinate, more formal meetings and briefings, or written documents.

Many studies have shown that upward information flow produces more effective organizations. As apparent from the cybernetic model, feedback adds the dynamic element that allows the leader to reassess and adjust guidance to subordinates on a continuous basis.

Need for Accuracy   Unless there is accurate information concerning subordinate performance and reaction, the leader cannot adequately supervise. Two-way communication, where feedback flows both up and down leads to greater effectiveness in task performance, greater acceptance, and higher motivation on the part of subordinates.

Why, then, is effective upward communication within organizations so often unsatisfactory?

Degree of Satisfaction   For one thing, the difference in status among various levels within the organization seems to ensure that downward communication is much more prevalent than upward communication. When people differ in organizational status, communication tends to flow more easily from the high status to the low status person.

In fact, the direction of communication helps define status.

Also, the decision making level has a significant impact on the amount of upward communication which takes place within an organization. Centralizing decision making at higher echelons may result in less upward communication concerning organizational goals and tasks.

By contrast, where participation is sought in decision making, greater upward communication will naturally occur.

Accuracy   Studies also show serious problems associated with the accuracy of upward communications. Understandably, there is a significant lack of upward negative feedback.

That is, we tend to tell our superiors what we want them to hear--those things which reflect favorably on us--and omit or downplay the importance of negative aspects of our performance.

We also tend to tell people what we feel they want to hear. Why? The answer in both cases no doubt stems from the status and power differences built into the organizational structure in which the superior has the power to administer rewards and punishments.

If rewards are based only on positive feedback, then negative feedback soon disappears.

Exposure and Feedback   One study graphically summarizes findings which further illustrate the salient differences between upward and downward communication in organizations. It depicts the incidence of leader exposure and feedback in an organizational setting.

Exposure, in this context, refers to the leader's willingness to open up to others, to be honest about feelings and emotions. Feedback, on the other hand, refers to the leader's willingness to seek information from others.

Leaders are less willing to expose themselves with superiors than with subordinates, but they seek more feedback from superiors than from subordinates. More effective communications probably would result from the reversal of these tendencies.

Exposure, in this context, refers to the leader's willingness to open up to others, to be honest about feelings and emotions. Feedback, on the other hand, refers to the leader's willingness to seek information from others.

Lateral Communication Lateral, or horizontal communication, is that flow which moves between positions of relatively equal responsibility and authority in the organizational structure. The interaction of the leader with peers provides a good example of such lateral flow.

Frequency Coordination of actions by staff personnel assigned to different functional departments or agencies is another example. Lateral communication flow is somewhat more frequent in organizations than vertical flow since the flow is usually viewed as less threatening, and normally not as associated with rewards and punishments as upward communication is.

Less Distortion Further, since peers generally have a more common frame of reference, lateral flow is normally less subject to distortion than upward or downward flow. *In terms of our model of communication, there are fewer confounding differences between source and receiver.*

A strict hierarchical structure tends to discourage lateral communication. Theoretically, information should flow up the chain to a common superior and then back down to the appropriate level.

The excessive use of vertical communication may result in the opportunity for message distortion, not to mention the loss of time. An informal communication network within the organization often arises in response to the limitations of vertical communications.

Impact of Technology Researchers have suggested that as technology becomes more complex and coordination between organizational elements more important, organizations must readjust their communications systems to make direct lateral communications at lower levels in the organization more acceptable.

The Grapevine Lateral flow of information also exists in another form, sometimes called the grapevine. In the grapevine, communication flow across organizational lines, following the informal nets and groupings which exist within the organization.

The grapevine is normally more rapid and more flexible than formal flows, since it need follow no distinct organizational pattern or sequence. The use of the grapevine depends to a large extent on the relative effectiveness of the formally defined communication networks.

If information is readily available through formal channels, people tend to be less dependent on informal sources. *On the other hand, where formal lines are inadequate, people turn to the grapevine as a major source of information within the organization.*

While the grapevine follows no prescribed pattern, it tends to flow more along horizontal than vertical lines, with staff personnel tending to be more active than line personnel.

Just as the leader needs to be aware of the informal groups and the potential benefit or harm they may have on the organization, so should the leader realize the existence and possible impact of the grapevine.

Power can be related to access to information. The secretary who has access to sensitive organizational information can wield a great deal of power in the informal organizational structure.

Awareness of the grapevine can help the leader to augment the effectiveness of more formal communications flows.

<u>COMPLETE LEARNING EXERCISE 3 AT APPENDIX B</u>

ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTIVE 4:	Identify common communication problems in an organization.

STRATEGIES FOR SOLVING ORGANIZAT- ONAL COMMUN- ICATION PROBLEMS

Our description of the communication flow has already underscored some of the problems that occur in organizational communications. Here we will focus on specific communication problems that seem to be prevalent in existing organizations, specifically addressing data overload, message distortion, and incomplete feedback.

In reality, of course, these problems seldom exist in isolation. They are all interrelated, each affecting the other within the context of the organizational structure. Also, there are few, if any, magic tricks to more effective communication.

Many of the strategies we suggest here may appear to be little more than common sense. However, the evidence is overwhelming that few leaders are effective in using even these simple solutions to communications problems.

Data Overload

(Data overload is a serious combat issue for the leader and deserves careful study.)

In a data overload condition, leaders receive so much data they cannot adequately identify the relevant information.
In the moderate case, data overload can lead to:
- confusion,
- poor decisions,
- frustration.

In the extreme case, overload may result in complete system breakdown.

Technology

Much data overload occurs as a direct result of the dizzying growth in technology with its increasing output of complex and technically-oriented data. From 1960 to the present day, the number of computers installed for use worldwide has increased twenty-fold.

Personnel memos and minutes of recent meetings, the in-basket contents of an earlier day, are now buried under a mountain of computer printouts that provide constant updates on almost everything.

Leader Functions

Simple leadership functions, such as summarizing, analyzing, and setting priorities, all become increasingly difficult tasks for the leader under data-overload conditions. How can a leader manage data in order to avoid overload and yet retain sufficient data to make intelligent decisions?

Leaders at all levels are in ideal positions not only to funnel data, but also to filter it, sifting and sending only those data which need to be sent. An effective leader protects subordinates from overload, warding off the mass of data and passing only data that are meaningful, relevant, and necessary for subordinates.

An organizational policy which allows the leader to disseminate data on a "need to know" basis does a great deal to reduce data overload.

Use of Gatekeepers

Leaders can also reduce the extent to which they are exposed to data overload by the judicious use of gatekeepers--staff personnel whose function is to filter and summarize incoming data and make routine decisions.

Gatekeepers, however, may also keep important data from the decision-maker if allowed to filter in an uncontrolled fashion.

Queing

Queuing, a technique used to reduce overload by postponing the processing of low priority communications until the peak period recedes, is sometimes useful. The traditional hold box is a rudimentary method of queuing.

Diagnostic Systems

While technology may be a major culprit in creating data overload, organizational leaders can also use technology to their advantage by being more creative in developing and using diagnostic systems which provide critical decision making information in a simple, straightforward fashion.

Note for example the development of instrumentation on automobile dashboards. As sophistication in automobile technology increased, we have moved to a very simple system where a flashing red light gives a warning to the driver that a problem exists in some mechanical system.

For instance, instead of requiring the driver to remember that water at the boiling point is dangerous (as a gauge would show) it is sufficient to be warned, by a red light, that there is a dangerous condition in the cooling system.

Leaders can also use this type of critical indicator to simplify or reduce the data inputs that they need to facilitate decision making.

Review the

Perhaps the best organizational response to overload is to review

Need for Data   methodically the need for compiled data. The organizational leader can seek input from lower level leaders regarding what constitutes critical information at their level and what appears to be "make-work."

Perhaps the report that sits unnoticed in the leader's hold box should be the first one eliminated. In requiring reports from subordinates, the leader should ask: "What would we do if we did not have these data?"

Message Distortion   Throughout this chapter, we have discussed factors which can result in distortion between the intended and perceived meaning of the message.

On an organizational level, the leader can do several things to minimize message distortion.

Leader Actions   In a very fundamental way, the leader can ensure that organizational goals- and objectives are more clearly defined and that, where necessary, the relative priority of these goals and objectives is clearly known.

Further, subordinates will be more likely to interpret a directive properly if they can see how it fits into the larger organizational picture. Along the same lines, the more subordinates participate in policy formulation, the less likely they are to misunderstand messages related to that policy.

Redundancy   Redundancy can also help to reduce distortion. A message can be sent several times over the same channel or transmitted simultaneously over several parallel channels.

Prioritize   The leader can assess the priority of a message and determine which channel or combination of channels may be appropriate. Studies have shown that subordinates filter out message traffic they do not consider important.

Routine messages passed verbally throughout the organization often do not reach the bottom. Knowing this, the leader may want to disseminate high priority messages verbally, using written messages on the same topic to provide redundancy.

On the other hand, it may be more effective to provide written notice of routine message information in summary form.

Back Briefs   Requiring a brief back on priority messages can also be effective in reducing distortion. Routinely, the briefing of a plan is followed by a period during which the receiver may ask questions.

Misunderstand-
ings and Leader
Awareness

Unfortunately, this approach only clears up those points about which the receiver knows there is confusion. Left unresolved, to surface at a later time, are misunderstandings of which the receiver is unaware.

A way to discover those issues is to have the receiver immediately repeat (brief back) the communication, as he or she understands it; or at least important portions of the communication. Such a technique can be employed easily by leaders at all levels.

The delays that can be prevented in the later implementation of a plan may make the initial cost in time worth the effort.

Incomplete
Feedback

The last major problem we will discuss is incomplete feedback. This encompasses several problems associated with both downward and upward communication within an organization.

Downward
Feedback

A continuous two-way flow of communication with feedback going in both directions is needed to create a dynamic framework of understanding. Downward feedback should include honest, meaningful information on subordinate performance that the subordinate can use to improve.

It should be constructive and motivate the subordinate toward accomplishment of organizational objectives and goals. Feedback coming up the chain must present an accurate picture for the leader of what is taking place at subordinate levels so that the leader will have information needed to make rational decisions.

As we have seen in discussing the dominant characteristics of various communications flows, however, feedback of the nature we have just described is generally uncommon.

Leader Actions

There are some specific things leaders can do to foster the type of feedback desired. Probably the most important is that the leader can work to reduce the defensiveness normally existing in organizational climate.

Defensiveness

Defensiveness tends to cause subordinates to hold back comments, find ways to conceal their mistakes in an effort to be seen more favorably, enter into win-lose confrontations, and attempt to dominate, impress and escape.

A supportive climate, on the other hand, tends to encourage the opposite behaviors. Such a climate fosters openness, a willingness to take risks, innovation and a willingness to confront issues objectively.

Transforming the Climate

A defensive climate can often be made more supportive merely by altering the means by which the leader communicates with subordinates. One researcher has identified several dimensions along which the leader can control the degree of defensiveness. Among these dimensions are:

- the degree of evaluativeness on the part of the leader,
- the degree of control by the leader,
- the degree of spontaneity in communication,
- the degree of empathy of the leader, the degree of equality between leader and subordinate,
- the degree of certainty on the part of the leader.

We will address each of these several dimensions as to their impact on communication. Although they will be discussed separately, the effect on climate in an organization is cumulative.

Degree of Evaluativeness

The existence of an evaluative climate, where communication is frequently directed at evaluating the work of subordinates, tends to contribute to defensiveness. Consider the response of a leader to a report submitted late by a subordinate.

"Why didn't you finish the report on time?"

In response to this evaluative question, the subordinate is forced to explain his actions-that is, be defensive.

On the other hand, the leader might comment,

"I noted that you didn't finish the report on time"

is a statement which is merely descriptive of the situation that exists. The latter tends to generate less defensiveness, but still addresses the issue-a late report.

Degree of Control

Consider the following response by a leader as a result of an improperly submitted report: *"You completely missed the point. Go back and do it again."*

This statement tends to generate defensiveness on the part of the subordinate in that the subordinate has been attacked and no guidance is given to help correct the situation. Consider the statement:
"Can we look at some of the other critical issues bearing on this problem?"

In the first case, the subordinate must be unusually open in order to learn what the leader is looking for in terms of outcomes.

In the second case, the invitation is made available by the leader in a problem-oriented manner, thus reducing defensiveness.

Degree of Spontaneity.
An air of spontaneity in communication will tend to reduce defensiveness compared with a method that suggests a carefully planned communication strategy or a hidden motivation.

Spontaneity can be generated by the comment:
"*If either of us sees a problem that needs to be addressed as we work on this issue, let's have a meeting.*"
    Compare the subordinate response to this statement with*:*
"We will have a meeting each week until the project is complete."
Scheduled meetings cause the subordinate to be prepared even when timing may be inappropriate.

Degree of Empathy
Empathy and concern expressed in communication as opposed to confrontation, evaluation or even efforts to maintain neutrality will normally reduce defensiveness on the part of subordinates.

A statement such as:
"*Did you have some problem which made you late for work?*"
tends to generate less defensiveness than,
"Why were you late for work?" or even "*I noticed that you were late for work."*
a neutral statement.

Degree of Equality
Attempts by the leader to reduce the explicit hierarchical nature of the organization can also reduce defensiveness. A statement by the leader that
"I have a good idea for a solution,"
can stop subsequent discussion in that the subordinates would probably not want to confront the boss on the issue or point out that the leader's solution is perhaps not the best one.

On the other hand, a statement such as*,*
 "I have some thoughts on the subject, but I would like to hear your ideas,"
tends to produce more openness in that the subordinate is on a more equal basis.

Degree of Certainty
Essentially, the less certain the communication by the leader, the less defensiveness will be aroused in the subordinate. For instance, the statement:
"There is no question in my mind what is causing the trouble,"
may arouse more defensiveness than a provisional statement such as:
 "I have some thoughts as to the cause of the problem, but I am willing to consider others."

Those leaders in an organization concerned with the long-term development of their people, and willing to accept certain levels of" error-trusting", will build confidence in their subordinates.

When those errors are the result of making an honest effort, people will learn and grow from the experience. Sometimes this is referred to as allowing the freedom to fail.

In such a climate, subordinates are less prone to hide mistakes and to squelch negative feedback.

In a sense, a leader is taking a risk by opening up to subordinates with feelings, opinions, and attitudes. However, studies have shown that when the leader exhibits such openness, subordinates are more prone to disclose their own feelings and attitudes for the betterment of organizational outcomes.

Along the same lines, we have already noted that feedback is more accurate when rewards are based on accurate, rather than favorable, feedback.

As already mentioned, many of the communication strategies discussed in this section seem relatively simple courses of action for the leader.

Yet, as common sense as these appear on the surface, evidence suggests that they are generally not well executed by leaders. Routine, meaningful interface between leader and subordinate is necessary to foster good communication flow.

It is also a key ingredient of a supportive climate. A sound performance appraisal system, combined with appropriate counseling techniques, can help considerably to engender effective upward and downward feedback.

COMPLETE LEARNING EXERCISE 4 AT APPENDIX B

ENABLING LEARNING OBJECTICE 5:	State the factors that make a message convincing.

MAKING THE MESSAGE CONVINCING

Up to this point, we have developed a general communication model, discussed several factors that contribute to the distortion of meaning, and identified several strategies for solving specific organizational communication problems.

All of this has been designed to help us understand more clearly how we can accurately transfer meaning from one individual to another. For the leader, however, there is another dimension of communication that is important—using communication to stimulate people to act in a particular way or to change their attitudes toward some aspect of the communication.

As a final point, therefore, we will briefly discuss those elements of the Cybernetic Model of communication as they pertain to making communication more effective in persuading others.

CHARACTER-STICS OF THE SOURCE

One of the most reliable findings from studies in persuasive communication is that the credibility of the sender of the message greatly influences the persuasion attempt.

Status of the Source

In one experiment, each of two randomly selected groups of people heard the same message. For one group, the message was attributed to a well-known expert in the field, while in the other group the same message was attributed to a lesser-status source.

As might be expected, the message attributed to the high-status source, even though the message was identical, there was much more attitude change in members of the group.

Think of your own experience. Who are you more likely to listen to on a technical matter? A personal matter? One way for the leader to increase credibility is to demonstrate expertise in a particular area of concern to the subordinates.

By communicating from a position of expertise, the leader may gain an added bonus in attempts to persuade subordinates.

Intention of the Source	Which message would you more likely believe—a formal briefing by members of the organizational hierarchy, or a discussion of the same topic between your supervisor and a chief assistant that you overhear?
Persuasion	People are generally less apt to be persuaded by communications which they perceive as being intended to persuade them, perhaps because it lowers the credibility of the source. In one case the organization may be perceived as providing carefully orchestrated material designed to meet several goals, while in the other the supervisor may be viewed as voicing inner most private thoughts on the subject.
	The less apparent it is that the source is attempting to change attitudes, the more likely the receiver will be influenced by the communication. From this conclusion, the prescription for the leader is fairly clear.
Leader Actions, Consistency	First, it is important that the leader's publicly stated views and opinions are consistent with "off-the-cuff" remarks and behaviors. If they are inconsistent, the latter will probably bring about greater results, often to the detriment of organizational goals and leader credibility.
	Second, the leader needs to understand that "command performances" often have limited effect on subordinate attitudes—particularly when quoting the "the party line".
	The more effective strategy may be to influence subordinates in more subtle, informal forums.
Liking and Similarity	There is a relationship between the source being liked, respected, or seen as similar, to the previous two factors
Internal Consistency	In order to understand this, we need to remind ourselves of the need for internal consistency. Much research suggests that people have a need for their world to be predictable and consistent. When they receive input from the environment that is inconsistent with their existing attitudes, cognitive mechanisms take over to bring the elements into alignment.
Cognitive Dissonance Theory	One particular explanation for this phenomenon, cognitive dissonance theory, specifically predicts that when people's beliefs, attitudes and behaviors are inconsistent, one or the other must be modified in order to reduce cognitive dissonance.

This theory has relevance for persuasive communications. For instance, what happens if a person you like or respect makes a statement that does not fit comfortably into your existing belief pattern?
According to cognitive dissonance theory you are faced with a dilemma. If you cannot disregard the message, you must either change your existing belief pattern or change your attitude toward the person making the inconsistent statement.

If you like, respect or see a person as being similar to yourself, the tendency is to change your belief to be more consistent with the new information.

Leader Actions   Consider a leader attempting to convince a group of subordinates that they should support an unfavorable personnel action passed down from a higher organizational authority.

What change in attitude toward the personnel action would you expect if the leader was liked and respected?

What if the leader was disliked or not respected. The attitude toward the disliked personnel action would probably be very different based solely on the relationship with the leader who was attempting to persuade.

Application of   According to cognitive dissonance theory, in the first case, unless the
Theory   subordinates are willing to downgrade the source of the communication (the liked leader) they must develop a more positive attitude toward the action or they will probably not change in a more positive direction.

There is an advantage for the leader if subordinates will internalize attitudes supportive of the organizational policy.

We tend to like those whom we perceive as similar to ourselves. One complication of a leader-subordinate relationship, however, is that subordinates usually perceive their leaders as markedly different from themselves.

Accordingly, liking, in the traditional sense of the word, is difficult to obtain for an organizational leader, particularly early in the association. The leader who is aware of these encumbrances can take actions to enhance respect.

By building up credits in the minds of subordinates the leader may be able to compensate for <u>initial</u> lack of similarity or liking in the senior-subordinate relationship and thereby increase the likelihood that an attitude change attempt will be effective.

CHARACTER-ISTICS OF THE MESSAGE

If someone makes a statement, which is widely divergent from our own views, it is usually much easier to reject that statement than if it is relatively close to our own view. Often, we tend to exaggerate existing discrepancies.

Discrepancy From Current Position

That is, we tend to see moderately discrepant messages as farther from our own views than they really are. The problem for the leader is that an easily rejected message will fail to persuade.

Evidence has shown that people generally have a zone of acceptance around a given attitude. Within this zone, we are more likely to accommodate or assimilate the new position presented.

Outside this zone of acceptance (which varies for individuals), the message will be rejected. An obvious implication of this phenomenon for the leader is that, given a desired end state, several incremental changes in attitude, as opposed to a single major (thus easily rejected) attempt, is more likely to be accepted without resistance.

Structure of the Message

In order to persuade effectively, should we tell both sides of the story, or only our side? Should a conclusion be stated or not?

Empirical data show that most often, two-sided communication is more effective in changing attitudes than the one-sided communication. This is particularly true for listeners of higher intelligence.

One possible explanation for this finding is that a two-sided communication causes the source to be perceived as more honest and open, more credible, and less overt in initiating change. Leaving the conclusion unstated appears to have the same effect. In effect, the speaker is saying, "Here are the data on both sides of the issue. You decide for yourself." People tend to feel less manipulated and more in control of themselves under circumstances of implied choice.

Novelty of the Information

We attend more to novel stimuli in our environment. This is also true in communication. In a typical experiment, two groups of students are exposed to the same message.

 One group is told prior to hearing the message that it will contain some new information on the topic, while the other is told that it will merely be a review of the material.

Even though the same message is heard by both for the first time, more attitude change occurs in the group which thinks the material is novel. If people hear an argument or logic that is contrary to their current position, they tend to reject it if they have heard it before and have already considered it in forming their opinion.

If, however, novel information is included in the persuasion attempt, people may rethink the problem and be more prone to change their attitudes as a result.

Thus, the more novel the approach in an attempt at persuasion, the more likely that the receiver will change attitudes.

CHARACTER-ISTICS OF THE RECEIVER   In order to be effective, the message must be both received and understood. The phenomenon of arousal seems to influence the extent to which this occurs. People must be sufficiently aroused in order to attend to a given message.

Arousal   On the other hand, a high state of arousal may interfere with a person's ability to properly handle new stimuli. Studies on the effects of arousal caused by fear and aggression are consistent with this observation.

This is particularly important to the leader who believes that threats of punishment are effective in persuading subordinates. In fact, a series of studies indicate a marked increase in attitude change at stages of low to moderate fear, and little or no change at high levels of fear arousal.

Personality   Personality characteristics influence perceptions. Several personality factors have also been shown to influence propensity for attitude change.

For example, people with low self-esteem are more easily persuaded than people with high self-esteem, and people with high self-esteem are more likely to make persuasion attempts.

People with an internal locus of control are generally more difficult to persuade than are people with an external locus of control. Intelligence, although not directly related, interacts with some of the other personality variables discussed.

For example, as previously stated, the two-sided argument without stating a conclusion works best if subordinates are sufficiently intelligent to follow the logic and arrive at the conclusion on their own. People of lesser intelligence may be befuddled or overwhelmed by such arguments and thus unable to act appropriately.

Commitment and Volition

The final factor we will discuss is the effect of the degree of commitment, and the level of choice offered to subordinates. Two things appear to be operating in this area—overt behaviors and public statements.

Recall the concept of cognitive consistency addressed earlier—that is, people have a need for their world to be consistent. Thus, it is difficult for a person to act one way and yet believe another.
Once people act of their own volition, they are much harder to move from a position that supports their actions. Similarly, making a public statement of intent appears to harden a person's resolve to act in a given way (Alcoholics Anonymous and similar organizations operate on the principle of public commitment).

In a series of experiments, people were offered either $20 or $1 to perform a distasteful, embarrassing task. Measures of liking and satisfaction for the task, taken after the task was performed, showed that the low paid group had a greater liking for the distasteful task than the higher pay group.

Why would this be? According to cognitive dissonance theory, the low paid group, having made a commitment by performing the noxious task, was forced to think to themselves, "Anyone doing this task for so little money must really enjoy it. I did it, therefore I must have enjoyed it."

By the same logic, the highly paid group could rationalize their behavior by saying that they only did it for the money. Therefore, there was no attitude change required in order to maintain internal consistency.

Thus, if the leader can convince subordinates to perform a desired course of action of their own volition or make a public statement of intent or support of a given course of action, the probability of a change in attitude in the desired direction is much higher.

COMPLETE LESSON EXERCISE 5 AT APPENDIX B.